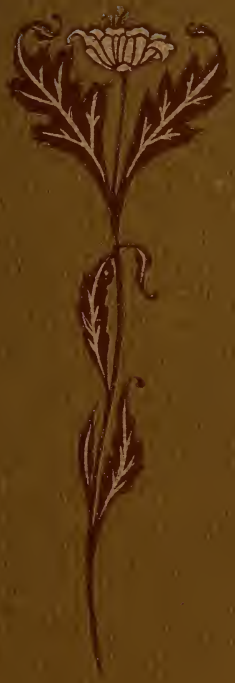

Trick-Winning Whist

By Two Trophy Winners

MAR 27, 1903
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HAVING been asked to give the system of play used by us with some success in the local clubs and tournaments, I have selected the following rules and comments from the note-book of my partner, Mrs. J. C. Gallagher, for the benefit of those who care to know our method, and not with any desire to instruct.

MARY QUEEN

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OPENING LEADS.

Count your cards, assort them carefully, alternating the red and black suits.

Before the play form in your own mind some method of defense or attack, whether the hand is best suited to make a long suit or whether it would be best for roughing, and open accordingly.

Not having trump strength, open the longest plain suit.

Holding five or more trumps lead them.

Holding three of each suit and four trumps, generally lead trumps.

Make a short suit opening lead only when you hold four indifferent trumps (Knave or ten high), and all plain suits worthless.

ACE LEADS.

Lead Ace, holding the Ace and any four or more, including one court card.

Never lead the Ace holding Ace, King and Queen (see Queen lead).

Lead the Ace in all cases holding the Ace, Queen and the Knave.

When the suit contains five or more, lead the Ace and follow with the Knave. When the suit is less than five lead the Ace and follow with the Queen to show a short

suit. Holding Ace, Queen, Knave and ten, lead the Ace and follow with the ten.

Lead Ace when the suit is six or more with or without a court card, and follow with the original fourth best, unless you hold the Ace and King, when you follow with the King.

The Ace led indicates a long suit, except when followed by the Queen or some low card (not Knave), which could not be the fourth best of a five card suit.

KING LEADS.

The King is led only when the suit is exactly four, and must be supported by either the Ace or the Queen. Holding the Ace and King and exactly four in suit, lead the King and follow with the Ace. Holding King and Queen and two others, lead the King, and if it holds the trick, follow with the original fourth best, as your partner must have the Ace.

Holding Ace, King, Queen and one, lead King and follow with the Queen.

QUEEN LEADS.

Lead the Queen, holding Queen and any four or more including the King, but not the Knave.

Holding King, Queen and three or more small cards, lead Queen, and if it holds the trick, follow with the original fourth best card.

Holding Ace, King, Queen and two or more small cards, lead the Queen and follow with the Ace if the suit was exactly five, follow with the King if the suit was originally more than five.

Never lead the Queen holding the King, Queen and Knave.

KNAVE LEADS.

Lead the Knave, holding the King, Queen and Knave and any two or more cards.

Holding the King, Queen and Knave and two or more small cards, lead Knave; if the Knave holds the trick follow with the King if the suit was originally five, or with the Queen if the suit was longer than five.

Holding Ace, King, Queen, Knave and one or more others, lead the Knave, and follow with the Ace if the suit was five; follow with the King if the suit was six, and with the Queen if the suit was originally seven or more.

TEN LEADS.

Lead the ten holding Queen, Knave, ten and any one or more small cards.

Never lead the ten when the suit contains any card higher than the Queen.

NINE LEADS.

Lead the nine when holding Ace, Queen, ten and nine.

Lead the nine holding Ace, Knave, ten and nine, or when it is the fourth best card of a suit containing the King, Knave, ten and nine.

TRUMP LEADS.

Lead trumps as you would plain suits when you hold three or more honors; two court cards supported by any card as high as a ten, or when you hold any combination of seven or more, otherwise lead the original fourth best.

When not opening a suit with a high card always lead the original fourth best.

When you open a suit with a high card and it holds the trick, follow with the original fourth best unless you still hold the command.

FORCED LEADS.

When obliged to lead a suit containing only three cards, lead high if the best card is the Knave or smaller; lead low if the best card is higher than the Knave, unless you know from previous play that it is your partner's suit, when you should always give a strengthening card.

Holding Ace and two small cards lead low.

Holding King and two small cards lead low.

Holding Queen and two small cards lead low.

Holding Ace, King and one small card lead King and follow with the Ace.

Holding King, Queen and one small card lead King and follow with the low card.

Holding Queen, Knave and one small card lead Queen and follow with the Knave.

Holding Knave and two small cards or ten and two small cards, lead the best card.

When obliged to lead from a two-card suit, lead the better unless you hold the King and one, when you lead low.

In leading short suits generally choose a suit in which you hold a sequence and lead the highest card.

Holding King, Knave and one, lead Knave.

Holding Ace, ten and one, lead the ten.

SECOND HAND PLAY.

The second hand play is generally low, unless you hold two or more high cards of equal value; when you play the lower of the two.

Holding Ace and Queen, generally finesse the Queen, second hand, unless you have strong trumps and hope to bring your high cards in after trumps have been exhausted.

Holding the King and one low card, or the Queen and one, play low except when the eight or nine is led, when you should cover it.

When an honor is led from strength and you hold the Ace, second hand, generally play it the first time around.

As a rule play second hand as you would lead, always trying to take a trick with the lowest possible card.

When trump strength is with you play a more backward game, as your high cards may be used to advantage when trumps have been exhausted from the adversaries.

Always play the command of a suit, second hand, the second time around unless you know a lower card will take the trick.

TRUMP SECOND HAND.

Generally play low unless wishing to stop the trump lead.

Holding King and a small card, play King except on the ten led from strength.

Holding Queen and a small card, play Queen second hand.

Holding King, Queen and one small card, play Queen second hand.

Holding Queen, Knave and one, play Knave second hand.

Holding King, Queen and two small cards, play low.

THIRD HAND PLAY.

On your partner's lead of a low card, play your best when trying to take the trick, or with two or more honors in sequence play the lowest of the sequence.

Play low on any honor led by your partner, except when holding Ace and only one low card, on partner's lead of Knave for strength, when you should play Ace to unblock.

If your partner leads a card as high as a nine generally pass it.

When your partner leads a ten from strength pass it, unless holding the Ace, King and one indifferent card, when you play King and return Ace to unblock.

Holding Ace, Knave and one, on your partner's lead of Queen from strength play Knave to unblock.

Holding King, Queen and one, on partner's lead of Ace from strength play Queen to unblock.

It is best never to finesse on your partner's original lead until the second time around, unless trump strength has been declared with you.

In trumps never finesse on your partner's original lead, but the second time around finesse as deeply as possible.

When trumps are led from weakness or towards the end of the hand finesse.

Always return your partner's suit before showing your suit, unless you know it will be trumped or that it is thoroughly established, or when you hold the first round with a card as low or lower than the Queen.

Always return partner's trump lead unless you know trumps were opened from four (showing three of each suit and four trumps) and you have nothing to make.

The third hand should try to take the trick and return the suit, always returning the higher of two or the lowest of three remaining cards. When you hold the command it should always be returned or played the second time around.

UNBLOCKING.

When you and your partner hold the entire control of a suit, the weaker hand should give up to the stronger.

If your partner leads, showing a suit of five or more, and you hold four of that suit, unblock by playing your third best card on the first lead, your second best card on the second lead, holding your lowest card until last.

If your partner leads the Knave from strength, and you hold only the Ace and one small card, play the Ace and return the small card after trumps have been exhausted.

Holding Ace, Knave and one, on Queen led from strength play Knave to unblock.

Holding Ace, King and one on a ten lead, play King and return Ace to unblock.

Holding Ace and small ones or King and small ones on a ten lead, play low the first time around, but play the high card the second time around to unblock.

Holding King, Queen and one on Ace lead from strength, play Queen to unblock. On partner's lead of nine use rule of eleven to unblock.

FOURTH HAND PLAY.

Take the trick if against you with the lowest possible card.

TRUMP SIGNALS.

When you are not trying to take the trick, play any unnecessarily high card, and then a lower one to command your partner to lead trumps.

You should signal for trumps holding five trumps if one is an honor. Signal for trumps with more than five even without honors.

Signal holding four trumps, three of them honors and unusually good suits.

With five indifferent trumps, do not signal unless you or your partner have something to make.

Call for trumps in any case where you would lead them, if you had the lead.

Any discard of a card as high as an eight or nine of an unplayed suit the first three or four rounds is a call for trumps.

When an honor is turned to your right, a lead of an eight or nine or any irregular play is a call for trumps. The third hand player should try to take the trick and give a strengthening card through the honor turned, enabling his partner to catch the turned card.

You may show your partner four trumps if, when not trying to take the trick you play your second lowest card the first time around, third lowest card the second time around and your lowest card the third time around.

THE ECHO.

When your partner leads trumps and you hold exactly three, indicate it by playing unnecessarily high and then a lower card.

To show strength in trumps (four or more) after your partner has either signaled or led trumps, play an unnecessarily high card and then a lower one on the first plain suit that is led.

When your partner leads trumps and you hold four indifferent ones, play the third best the first time around, the second best the second time around so that the lowest card may be missed, and not having made an echo your partner may be able to know you had four originally.

LEADING TRUMPS AFTER A SIGNAL.

When your partner has called for trumps, lead your best card if you are weak (holding three or less), your smallest card if you are strong, unless you hold the command when you should always lead that.

Holding Ace and two small cards, lead Ace and then second best card.

Holding Ace and three small ones, lead Ace and follow with the original fourth best.

ECHO AFTER A FORCE.

If you have four trumps and have been forced before your partner signals or leads trumps, echo to show you had four originally.

FORCE AFTER A SIGNAL.

If your partner has signaled and you held four or more trumps, trump in with your third best and lead the second best, unless you hold the command or two honors.

DISCARDS.

Always discard for the best protection of your own hand.

The original discard should be from weakness, unless trump strength has been declared against you, when you should discard once from your best protected suit to show your partner what it is.

At the beginning of a hand, on a lead where your partner is holding the trick you may show your trump strength or weakness by your discard. If you are weak in trumps and wish to be forced discard a low card—the two, three, or four—a discard of the five, six, or seven will show four trumps, and a discard of the eight, nine, ten or higher card is a call for trumps to be led.

Any discard of a card as high as an eight or nine of an unplayed suit is a call for trumps.

THE REVERSE DISCARD.

After trumps have been led any discard of an unnecessarily high card and then a lower one tells the partner to reverse the discard.

If your best suit is a short suit and a discard would weaken it, take a poor suit, when the adversaries are leading trumps, and discard first a high card, then a lower one, which tells the partner to reverse the discard.

When your partner is leading trumps, if possible discard from your weakest suit, but if by doing so you have to unguard an honor or blank an Ace, make the reverse discard by playing a high card and then a lower one from your long suit.

FORCING.

Rarely force your partner unless you hold four or more trumps or he has shown weakness in trumps.

Always force the adverse strong trump hand.

If strong in trumps, unless very strong, do not trump a doubtful trick second hand, but if weak trump fearlessly.

If your partner has led and has not led a trump, you may force him, but it is optional whether he takes it or not.

If you pass a doubtful trick it shows protection in trumps.

THE RULE OF ELEVEN.

When the fourth best card is led, if you subtract the face value of that card from eleven it will show you how many cards are out that can hold the trick.

The rule of eleven should be carefully used by both the second and third hand players whenever a card as high as the seven, eight, or nine is led.

SHORT SUIT.

Avoid opening a hand with a short suit as much as possible, but you may make a short suit lead to open a hand when you hold four weak trumps, nothing better than the Knave, with the other suits impossible to establish.

When leading short take your very shortest suit, leading a singelton or the higher of a two card suit except when you hold the King and one.

Never lead from a three card suit to open a hand.

GENERAL NOTES.

Watch carefully the fall of the cards, to know what has been played; when, how and by whom, is the all-important part of the game. Much may be gained by noticing the adversaries, their methods and eccentricities, for in Whist, he who hesitates is lost.

When your partner leads the fourth best card and it is taken by a card as low or lower than a Queen, do not return that suit immediately.

When you open a suit with a high card and have remaining two high cards of equal value, follow with the higher if the suit was four or less, the lower if the suit was five or more.

Try to make a long suit with only two or three trumps when you are the opening leader, by showing best suit established and then leading trumps if you have a reëntry card in every suit.

The weaker the trump lead the stronger must all suits be.

If you are the opening leader and hold five trumps, it is best to lead them, but with no good suit you may lead them as if you had only four (your fifth best instead of fourth best), in which case your partner, thinking you have three of every suit and four trumps, need not return them.

Always try to lead through strength and up to weakness. It is wise even to lead through trump strength when you have very good suit or when your trumps are equal to the adversaries.

When trumps have been exhausted lead plain suit as you would trumps if you have any card of reëntry.

When trumps are out you may blank an Ace if your suit is thoroughly established.

When your partner leads through a suit never return it.

When your partner leads up to strength return the lead at once.

If you were obliged to trump holding five trumps, then lead them as they are.

Always lead trumps as they are and echo to show what you had originally.

After discarding from your long suit lead it as it was.

Do not signal with five trumps unless one is an honor, but you should lead them if you or your partner have anything to make.

When the adversaries are signaling or leading trumps, give your partner a card you think he can trump, unless you know he holds the best trump.

In leading up to weakness always lead a strengthening card, such as Queen, Knave or ten.

In leading your partner's suit give a strengthening card, if it should hold the trick give your next best card.

When unable to return your partner's trump lead, give the lowest card of your weakest suit.

When trumps have been exhausted if your partner should make a regular King lead and follow with the Ace, play a high card and then a lower one to show that you cannnot take the third round of the suit.

When your partner makes a forced lead of a high card never cover it except when you hold both Ace and King and can make a third lead of the suit.

Try to take away the adversary's last card of his partner's suit so it will be impossible to give that lead when trumps are exhausted.

Only lead the thirteenth card to force an adversary's strong trump hand or place the lead.

When leading trumps if you find they are with you, your partner and the fourth hand, discontinue trumps and try to give your partner the lead, allowing him to lead through so you may finesse and catch more of the adversaries' trumps.

To hold a forchette you must hold the card higher and the card lower than the card led.

Second hand should not cover an honor led late in the hand with the Ace unless the King is the honor led.

If your partner should lead Queen from strength and you hold Ace, Knave and small one, play Knave on the Queen to unblock, unless you hold four trumps, when you play your Ace, exhaust trumps and return the Knave and then the low one.

Second hand should cover a supporting card led to strength when by doing so you can make a low card a command for another round.

It is not necessary to unblock on any four-card suit led by your partner.

Avoid changing suits as much as possible.

In order to stop a cross ruff, trump in with a high card, though it be an Ace, and lead the trump.

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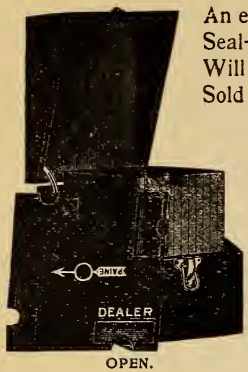

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